United Nations E/C.2/2003/3/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 April 2003
English
Original: English/French

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
2003 regular session
5-23 May 2003
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*
Consideration of special reports

Special reports

Addendum

I. Introduction

1. At its 2002 resumed session, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, in accordance with paragraph 61 (c) of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, reviewed reports submitted by the following organizations:

Transnational Radical Party

France Libertés: Fondation Danielle Mitterrand

Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples

2. Consideration of the reports was deferred to the 2003 regular session of the Committee pending the submission of additional reports.

II. Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples

3. The Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples (MRAP) is an international organization that has been on the Roster of the Council since 1974.

4. At its 2001 regular session, the Committee discussed a complaint brought by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran against MRAP. The grounds of the complaint was that the organization had provided accreditation to individuals who were members of the Modjahedin Khalgh Organization/National Council of Resistance (MKO/NCR), a movement considered a terrorist organization by the Islamic Republic of Iran, to take part in the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights. The Committee requested the organization to submit a special

* E/C.2/2003/1.

03-32342 (E) 240403 240403

report on the issues brought to the attention of the Committee by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

5. At its 2001 resumed session, the Committee reviewed the special report submitted by the NGO and found it to be unsatisfactory. The Committee requested the NGO to submit an additional special report. At the same session, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran circulated additional information on the participation of MKO/NCR members in the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights and the Third Committee of the General Assembly, upon which the new special report should be based.

6. At its 2002 regular session, the Committee found the NGO's reply to be unsatisfactory and requested that it submit a new special report for the 2002 resumed session. The Committee specified that the new report should focus on the abuse of its status through accreditation of MKO/NCR at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission. The organization was also requested to submit a declaration of good faith to demonstrate that it fully understood the accountability that accompanied its consultative status with the Council.

7. At its 2002 resumed session, the Committee requested that MRAP submit a written acknowledgement of error in judgement and assure the Committee that it would not in future accredit the two individuals who were accredited to the fifty-seventh session of the Commission, nor any other individual being a member of or having affiliation with MKO/NCR.

8. MRAP submitted the following statement on 31 March 2003:

> "We readily acknowledge that, with all due care for matters of style, it is difficult to establish a strict demarcation line between the sphere of human rights and what is normally called 'politics'.
>
> "It is, therefore, possible that the statements of our representatives could have been interpreted as 'political', for example with regard to imprisonments, the principle and application of capital punishment, or even respect for freedom of thought.
>
> "Although we have made efforts to avoid excesses, it is not inconceivable that, at certain points, some carelessness could have crept in and opened the door to misunderstandings.
>
> "If that is the case, although we have never been reproached on this ground, we express our most sincere regrets and offer our apologies. We are all the more ready to do so as such carelessness could nurture the mistrust of States with regard to accredited NGOs in general.
>
> "For that reason we are increasingly inclined to favour thematic approaches to the problems of racism and the right to development, as we have long done. However, this method is not without risk; in particular, recourse to examples can cause a given situation to become the case most representative of the violation of universal rights.
>
> "Such representation would be unjust with regard to the Islamic Republic of Iran, as the Iranian Government declares that it is, henceforth, in favour of bold reform.
>
> "Within the Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples (MRAP), there is no a priori suspicion or ideological aversion. There are

enough divisions in our world without our adding to them. Divisions of a religious nature are particularly dangerous.

"We would like to broach the issue of accreditation directly.

"We have considered the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MK) and the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) as two distinct entities.

"There are no ties between MRAP and any group and MK is no exception. However, MRAP receives bulletins and communiqués from numerous organizations.

"A number of organizations of Iranian origin, such as the Iranian League for Human Rights, the Committee for the Defense of Iranian Political Prisoners, the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran and, of course, NCRI, send us information and, sometimes, petitions.

"The information issued by these groups is more or less the same.

"It did not seem to us that NCRI was a terrorist group. It does not appear on the list of terrorist organizations established by the European Union; it is not the subject of any legal proceedings and, to our knowledge, none of its members is sought by Interpol. It has legitimate head offices in France and other countries, including the United States of America (in Washington, D.C.).

"The Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples had therefore no reason to suspect that organization.

"Our permanent correspondent in New York recently sent us a page of the *New York Times* containing a list of members of the United States Congress who themselves say that they support MK. We are far from supporting it; we only support human rights in Iran and in numerous other countries.

"The French Minister for Foreign Affairs maintains that it is important to pursue a policy of constructive dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran. This policy befits a State. His representative has told us that he has requested a number of encouraging signs, such as a moratorium on executions. That which a State permits itself to request can be legitimately supported by an NGO.

"We can admit that it was careless on our part to give accreditation to the four individuals mentioned in the document of the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, we can give our assurances that it was never our intention to provoke the representatives of Iran in Geneva. We have no malicious intention towards anyone.

"We never take issue with individuals, even in the name of antiracism. We consider human beings to be fundamentally equal and, thus, perfectible, a priori: that forms the basis of our antiracist doctrine and underpins all our practical activities, which anyone can observe and judge.

"We reiterate our most sincere regrets should our attitude or our public remarks have shocked or injured some people or have appeared to express hostile sentiments with regard to the Iranian State. We will take care to ensure that our attitude and remarks are less susceptible to misinterpretation than ever.

"However, like all NGOs that strive to defend universal human rights — all human rights without exception — we will not abandon our analyses, initiatives or proposals."